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### Homing body of work

**Citation for published version:**

Mowatt, S, *Homing body of work*, 2012, Artefact.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Early version, also known as pre-print

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# Homing

## Susan Mowatt

**Homing** is the title given to a body of work, which was produced between 2010 and 2012.

My interest lies in woven tapestry, not in the traditional sense of large-scale wall hangings, but in weaving as an act, as a means to induce the state of FLOW, through the slow, repetitious, time-consuming process and the direct contact with material.

My aim was to extend thinking around the relationship between art and wellbeing. My enquiry was informed from an art-making perspective rather than looking at how a work of art can affect the wellbeing of its audience.

***“ We must come down from the clouds where we live in vagueness and experience the most real thing there is: material”***

Annie Albers 1938

In a fast-paced world where we are increasingly dependent on screen-based activity and virtual worlds, I am interested in how and if, artists are able to address this imbalance? Are we storing up problems for future generations by neglecting our own formative impulse and acceptance of the intangible?

I wanted to explore this question by using durational drawing and weaving to determine the extent to which process itself can exist as an artwork. Everyone has the right to a creative life, but what place has making in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The body of work, **Homing**, contains shared ideas but be separated into three distinct parts:

1. A series of **drawings** of weaving and woven lines
2. Single coloured **woven lines**, produced on two warp yarns and installed from one side of a gallery space to the other.
3. A series of **short films with land**, in collaboration Davy Henderson, Scottish musician (Fire Engines, Win, Nectarine No.9 and The Sexual Objects)



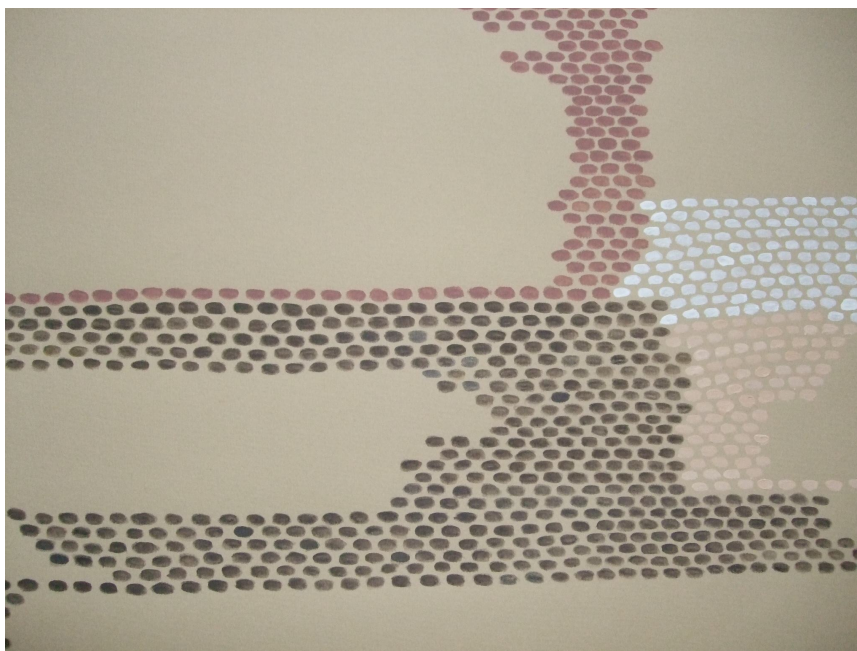
## Drawings

In the drawings I wanted to question the relevance of Tapestry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and determine whether it was still of principal interest. My focus was on drawing weaving, looking at how yarns interact and how they meet, twist, ply up, separate, get cut off. I am intrigued by the simple notion that:

**A length of yarn starts and finishes: a beginning and an end, or vice versa.**

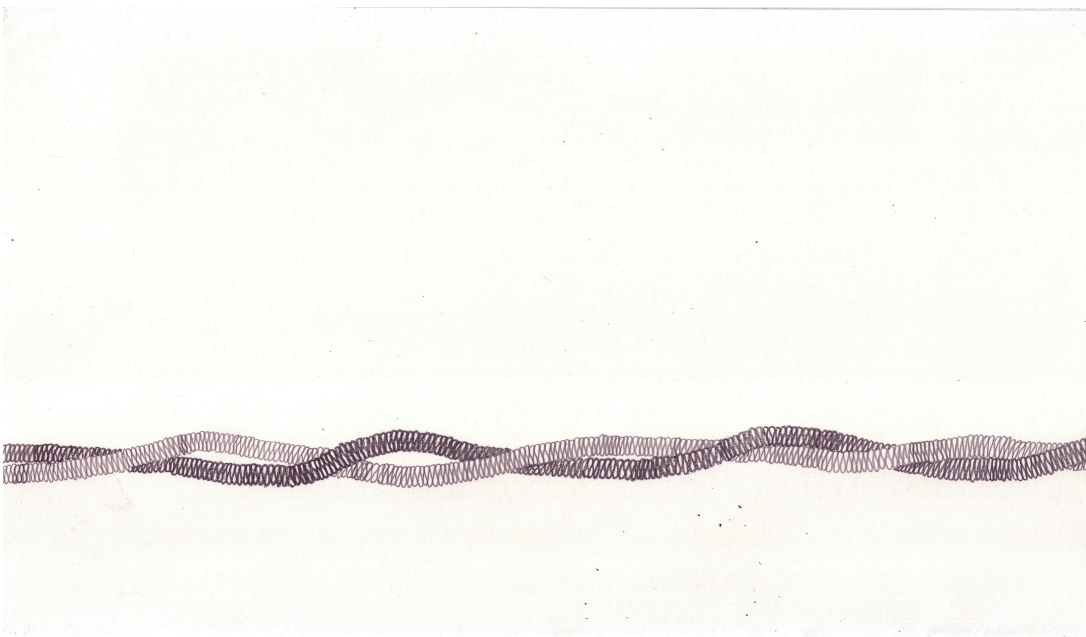
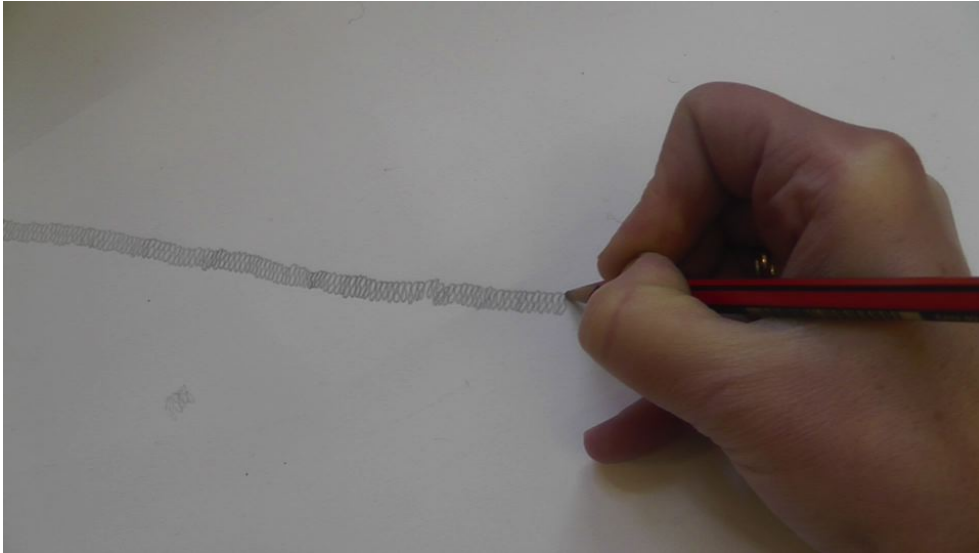


*Drawing of pink, brown and black weaving*



*Drawing of brown weaving*

The individual lines that travelled across the paper stopping at various stages midway became drawings in their own right: woven lines. These drawings demanded the motion, repetition, rhythm and similar investment of time required in weaving.



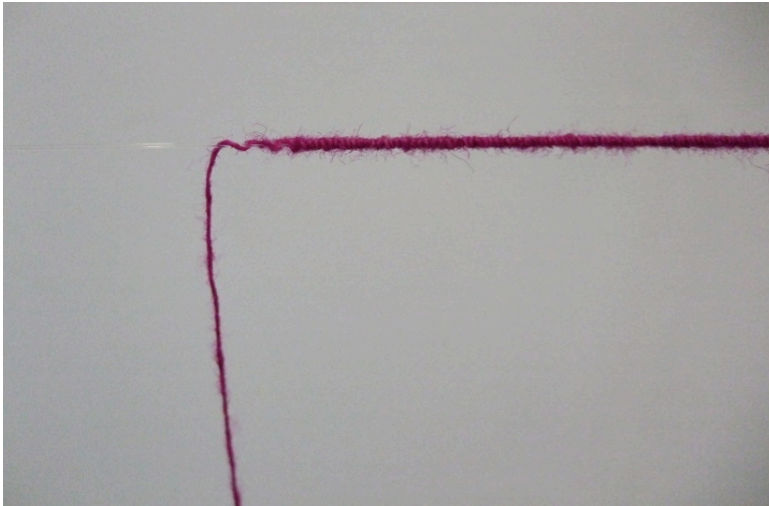
*Two lines*

## Woven Lines

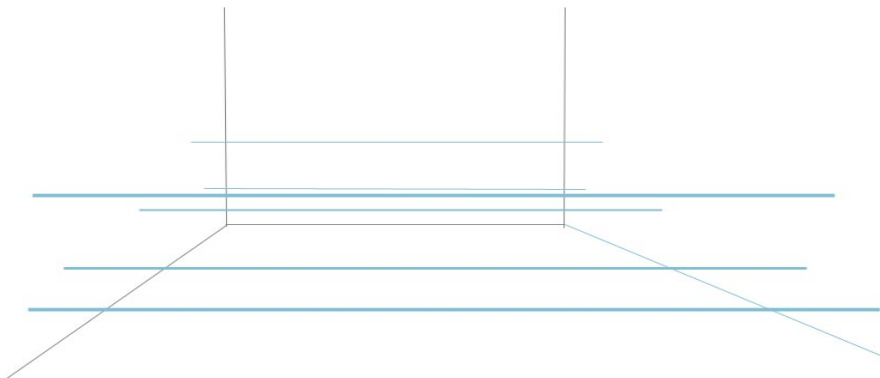
This work began as woven lines in space, on two warps that stretched from one side of the (studio) space to the other.



Studio shots



The idea of weaving and unweaving was key: there is no *product*, just a continuous act of making and being. The idea for the exhibition, which would become **Weaving Home**, began to form.



Blue Lines in space



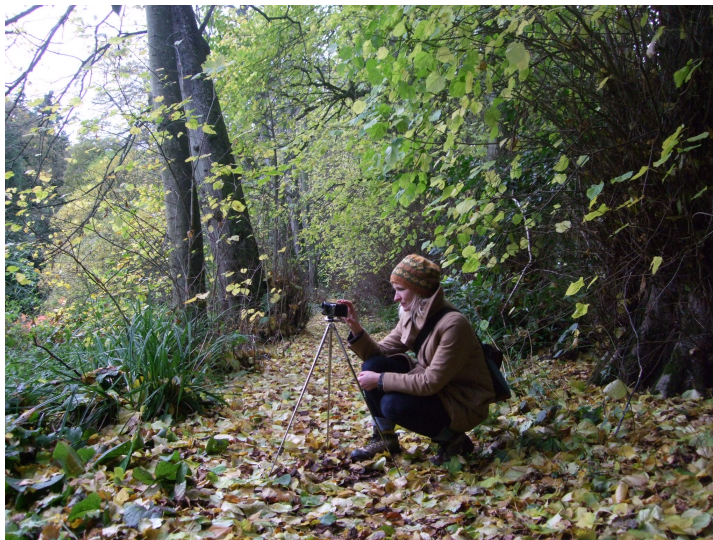
## Short Films with Land

I first collaborated with Davy Henderson in 2011 when we made the film *Coleslaw*, for the exhibition 'Vegetable Loves', curated by Polarcap. *Coleslaw* also marked my first attempt at filmmaking. It was an important work for me to make because many ideas being explored in the studio were translated into a new media. A little magic appeared out of its *slowness*, the fact that the material was soil and that the land is in an in-between state. It's just the earth, the sun and the land. The lines on the earth (the lands' warp and weft) contain traces of the past, present and future.



*Still from Coleslaw*

For the **Short Films with Land** (Dyke, Ants, Pink Lines, Mist, Tractor) I selected footage that had been shot in and around East Lothian over a period of several months. After editing, each of the films is under three minutes long.



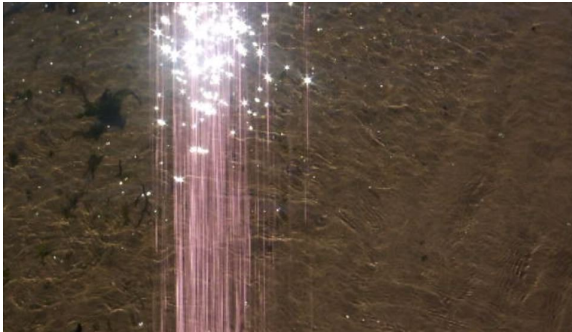
*Filming at Smeeton Lake*



*dyke still*



*ants still*



*pink lines still*



*mist still*



*tractor still*

In all the short films, lines feature in the landscape. Lines on the land mark the rhythms and repetition of daily life.

Like the lines on the land a tractor's tyres make: I was here, but I was on my way to somewhere else as well. Every connection is also a departure.



*Davy Henderson making music in situ*

Davy Henderson then composed music to fit each of the films.

There are three outputs for the Homing body of work

1. **homing**, the book
2. **Weaving Home**, a solo exhibition in GalleryGallery, Kyoto  
(with performances and artists talks)
3. **Interrupted Landing**, a group show, ArtHall, Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo  
With Paul Hullah, Davy Henderson and Hidetoshi Tomiyama  
(with performances and artists talks)

Funding was secured from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, Meiji Gakuin University, and Edinburgh College of Art

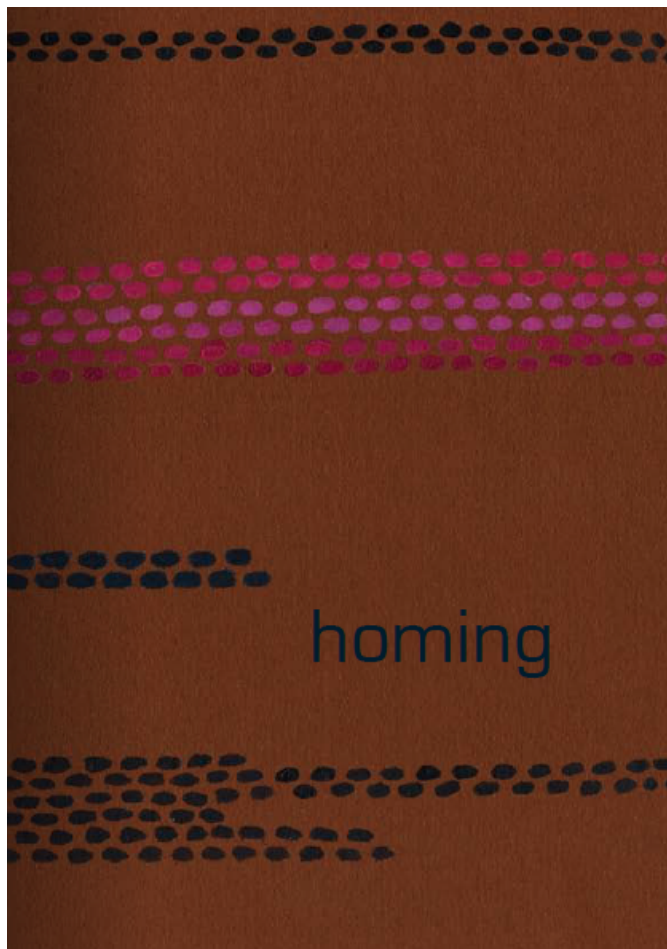


## homing, the book

**homing**, the book began as a second collaboration with the poet Paul Hullah. We had collaborated previously on the book of poetry and drawings, *Unquenched*, in 2002 (ISBN 0954271807)

As a starting point, Paul Hullah (Associate Professor of English Literature, Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo) wrote a series of 24 poems, the inspiration for which stemmed from the death of his wife, Akiko, in January 2009 after a 2-year fight with cancer. Because of the universality of this type of incidence, and as a result of subsequent events, the poems also grew to deal positively with 'connections' made by people: the importance of friendship and the need for continuity, cooperation and mutual understanding.

The drawings I produced in response used the idea of lines as lives.



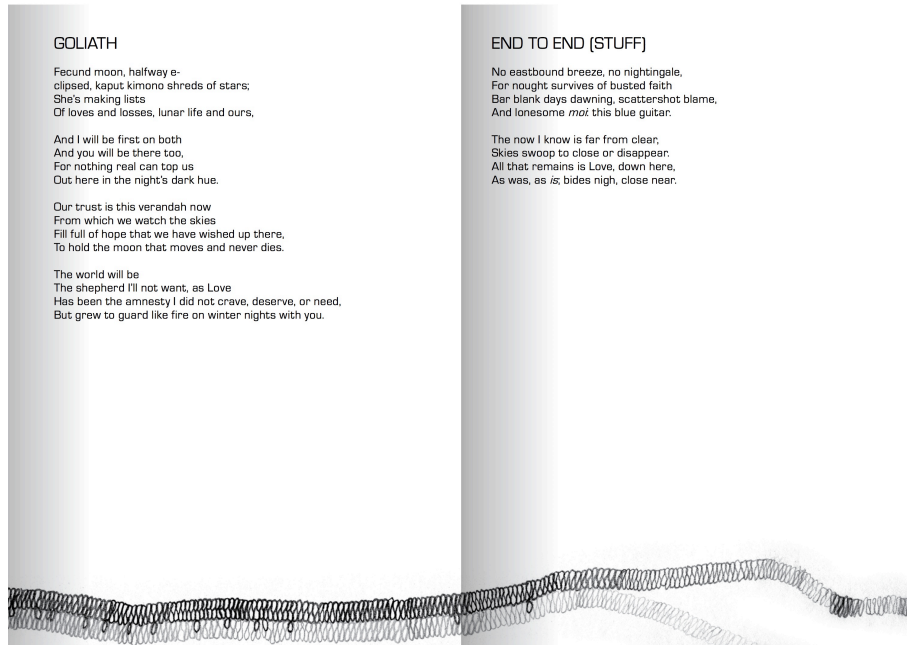
*homing cover*

**homing.** A book about love and loss.  
Poetry by Paul Hullah, Drawings by  
Susan Mowatt

Published by Word Power Books, 2011  
Edinburgh

24/8/2011 Book launch at Word  
Power Books, Edinburgh.

28/8/11 featured at the Edinburgh  
Book Festival Unbound event (with a  
reading by P. Hullah) 'Love's  
Rebellious Joy - a tribute to Paul  
Reekie', curated by Neil Cooper.



*View of GOLIATH and END TO END (STUFF)*

It was always our intention to expand the project beyond the book alone. In all aspects of this project, we aimed to question and address the nature of translation and conversion of media, and the roles that experience, culture, and ideology play in our understanding and interpretation of events. It evolved to include two exhibitions in Japan with a series of talks and performances, readings and performances in the UK and journal articles (pending).

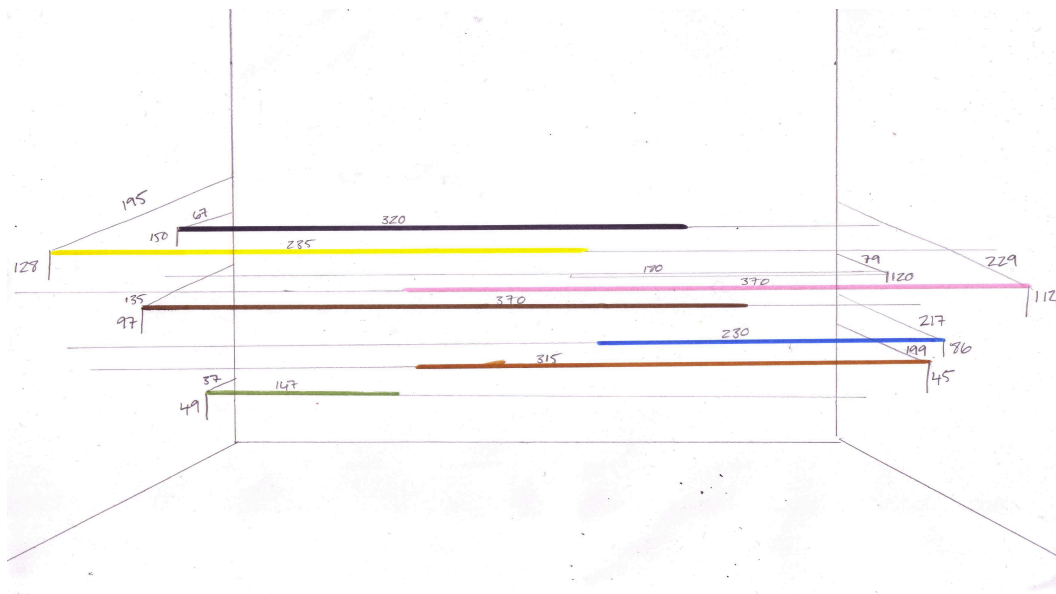


## Weaving Home

Curator Keiko Kawashima of **KICTAC** (Kyoto International Contemporary Textile Art Centre) invited me to hold a solo exhibition in her gallery, GalleryGallery, in Kyoto 2012. This became the exhibition Weaving Home (4-18 Feb 2012) in which all three works were installed: **homing** the book, **Woven Lines** and **Short films with Land**

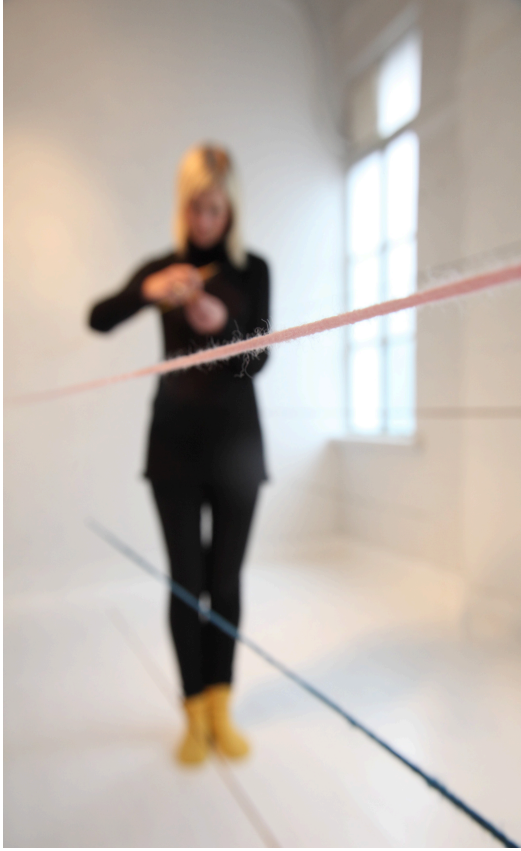


*Poster and invitation card for Weaving Home*



*Drawing, line map for GalleryGallery*

These two works were installed in the same gallery space with the films presented on a wall-mounted monitor.



*yellow line*



*pink line*

At certain points I performed in the space weaving or unweaving a line, wearing knitted socks in matching yarn. The work, **Short Films with Land**, was presented on a wall-mounted monitor at one end of the gallery space.



*white line*

The **homing** book was presented in an adjoining smaller gallery space, along with a sound work by Paul Hullah in which lines from the poems were translated into Japanese by Professor Hidetoshi Tomiyama, Professor of Literature, Meiji Gakuin University and spoken in both languages.





## Interrupted Landing

The **Short Films with Land** and the sound piece by Hullah/Tomiyama were also exhibited in the exhibition **Interrupted Landing** (which ran concurrently with the exhibition **Weaving Home**) at ArtHall gallery and performance space, Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo. The sound pieces were interspersed with the short films, looped, and presented on a large monitor placed in the middle of the blacked out gallery space



*Poster and invitation card for Interrupted Landing*



*Installation shot of Short Films with Land*

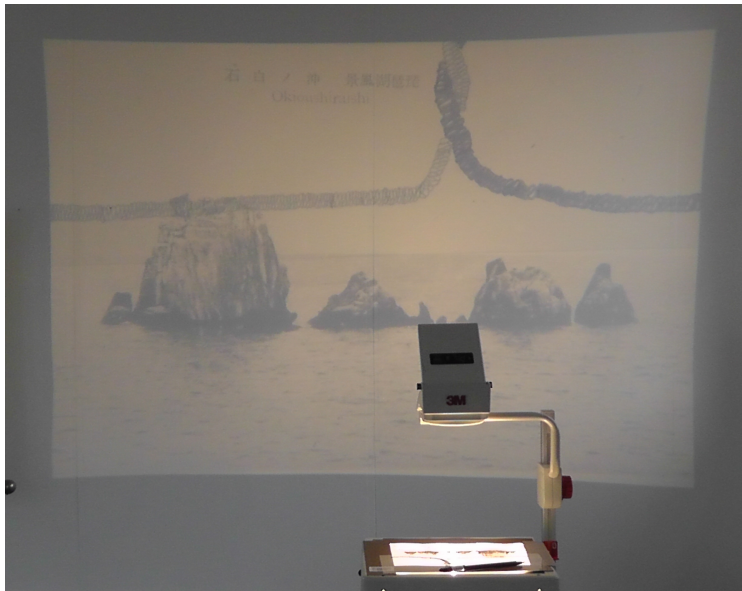
ArtHall,  
Meiji Gakuin  
University,  
Tokyo

## Recent activity

August 31 2012 Paul Hullah and I were invited to perform at Neu! Reekie! 21, a monthly spoken word/music event held at the Scottish Book Trust, Edinburgh. I made a live version of the woven lines featured in homing. Whilst Paul Hullah read aloud the poem 'Home', I performed a live drawing on an acetate of a found postcard of Okinoshiraishi, a small isolated group of Japanese inland islands.



*Paul Hullah reading 'Home'*



*drawing on acetate on overhead projector*

Currently I am writing an article for the Journal of the Society of Language and Culture, Faculty of Letters, Meiji Gakuin University (Tokyo, 2013, pending), based on the artist talk I gave at Meiji Gakuin University, February 16, 2012.